



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **U.S. AMBASSADOR EARL R. MILLER VISITS USAID DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS**

**DHAKA, March 8** – U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R. Miller visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts and key USAID development programs this week. Ambassador Miller, accompanied by USAID Mission Director Derrick Brown, met with residents and local government and community leaders.

In his engagements, Ambassador Miller said the U.S. government works closely with the Government of Bangladesh and other development partners to improve economic opportunities for local communities and promote conservation of the unique natural resources in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

During his visit, Ambassador Miller reviewed USAID's work with local communities to build resilient livelihoods and forest management systems that sustain biodiversity, the region's water supply, and improve incomes. USAID has helped 24,000 local community members improve their livelihoods through vegetable, poultry, pig, and goat farming. As part of improving water security, USAID programs have increased access to safe drinking water while reducing community dependence on timber and other forest products. USAID has also partnered with the Bangladesh Forest Department and local communities to plant 625 hectares of trees in reserve forests. Another 920 hectares will be reforested this year.

Ambassador Miller also saw first-hand the changing climate risks facing the region and efforts underway to improve responsiveness to natural disasters. Ambassador Miller and Mission Director Derrick Brown visited the Rangamati Sadar Hospital to observe USAID training for emergency response personnel. These training sessions enhance the capacity of health care personnel throughout the Chittagong Hill Tracts for emergency preparedness for mass casualty and disaster management.

The site visits were undertaken in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Development Programme.

The U.S. government, through USAID, has provided more than \$7 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2018, USAID provided nearly \$219 million in development assistance to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh through programs that expand food security and economic opportunity, improve health and education, promote democratic institutions and practices, protect the environment, and increase resilience to climate change.

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